

Inventory Guidelines

Introduction

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 41-3504 A. 1. (e) says that GITA will coordinate a “list of information technology assets owned, leased or employed by this state.” To that end, GITA developed a web application called Information Services Inventory System (ISIS) for agencies to report their IT inventories. With ISIS, the inventories may be maintained by agencies year-round as their assets move in and out of the agency, at the time that it happens instead of an annual exercise of counting all IT assets in a small time frame.

The information technology (IT) inventory has been very useful for a variety of reasons. First and foremost it has elevated the need for agencies to better manage their IT assets, especially PCs. Also, it has made agencies more cognizant about risks associated with not keeping track of software licenses. If software assets are not managed, agencies either risk over-buying software licenses, which means spending money when not needed, or under buying which put the agency in jeopardy of breaking software agreements and being subject to lawsuits.

Managing IT assets isn’t the only reason for the inventory. GITA has used inventory data to identify future projects, policies and standards, and terms in future IT contracts. It is occasionally useful in analyzing project investment justification (PIJ) requests. Finally, other stakeholders use the data for analysis in areas of their responsibilities.

This document will provide those responsible for IT inventory some guidance in maintaining their inventories.

There are three main components of the inventory: personnel, applications, and hardware/software inventory.

Personnel

GITA is not requiring personnel data to be reported at this time.

Applications

Data provided about applications is also required. GITA is particularly interested in what platforms applications are running on, what databases are supporting the applications, and what programming tools were used in development. However, all information asked of GITA is important and we request the data be filled out as complete as possible.

Definition of Data Elements

Note: The Other fields is required if you selected “Other” in the Database or Program Tools fields. The rest of the fields, except Comments, are required.

Application Name: The name of the application. The agency has the choice of providing either the official name or the most popularly used name of the application.

Application Description: A very brief description of the application.

High Level Category: This field provides seven selections in which you are required to make a choice among them. This helps categorize all applications. If none of the other selections seem applicable, choose “Agency Administration.”

Functional Adequacy: This signifies the agency’s evaluation of how functionally adequate the application is in providing the desired service. Select high, medium or low.

General Category: This field attempts another level of categorization of applications. Use the “Other” selection if none of the others seem applicable.

Strategic Importance: This field signifies the agency’s evaluation of the application’s strategic importance to the agency’s mission. It is possible for an application to have high strategic importance and yet be listed as non-critical. Select high, medium, or low.

Application Platform: Select the platform on which this application is built. There are four selections: Mainframe, Minicomputer, Server and Stand Alone PC. In the case of UNIX systems, select “Server” for any applications running on a UNIX platform in which more than one person has simultaneous access and choose “Stand Alone PC” for UNIX applications in which the applications are accessed by directly using the computer in which the application resides.

Lifecycle: Choose the application’s lifecycle stage. Choose Development if the application has not been placed in production. Choose Retirement if the application will soon be or is no longer in service. You may also delete the application if it is no longer in service.

Database: Please select the database that captures the information within the application. If the database is not listed, select “Other” and type the database name in the Other field.

Presentation Type: This identifies the user’s interaction or experience with the application. Select Client/Server for all non-web applications that have a graphic user interface (GUI). Select CRT for dumb terminals and for DOS applications on PCs. Select Terminal Emulation for applications with CRT like presentations that are accessed using a PC and may have GUI like characteristics because of third party software.

Origin: This field identifies how the application was originally acquired by the agency. Choose “Combination” if the application was acquired from more than one of the other sources listed.

Critical: Choose “Yes” if this application is critical. The evaluation of Critical is left up to the agencies. Some guidelines may include whether the public health or safety is in jeopardy if this application is not working for longer than 24 hours; whether the agency will likely have legal suite filed against it if the application is not working within 72 hours; if there is a court order or statutory requirement for the application to be available within specific time frames. It is possible for an application to have high strategic importance and yet be listed as non-critical.

Program Tools: Select as many program tools as necessary from the list provided. Hold down the control key while clicking on more than one program tool listed. If you don’t see a particular program tool, you may select “Other” and type it in the Other field.

Estimated Users: Round to the nearest whole number, the number of estimated people that access your application.

FTE State: This means the number of full-time equivalent employees, rounded to the nearest whole number, that maintain the application.

FTE Consultants: This means the number of full-time equivalent consultants (non-state employees), rounded to the nearest whole number, that maintain the application.

Comments: This field is strictly for agency use in any manner they choose.

Hardware and Software

The hardware and software inventory is the largest portion of the inventory requirements. It is what usually requires the largest portion of time to complete and the hardest to maintain. It also provides the most useful data to IT stakeholders and is most useful for agencies wanting to manage their assets.

The hardware and software inventory consists of network equipment, telecom, printers, scanners, plotters, mainframes, minicomputers, UNIX, servers, PCs, laptops, and the software that runs on all of these devices.

Mainframes, Minicomputers, UNIX and Servers

At this time GITA does not require a lot of data about additional hardware attached to these devices. It will be assumed that each of them may have DASD, tape drives, and other associated hardware equipment. The agencies do not have to input this additional hardware information into the system unless it is a benefit to them. This requirement may change in future years.

PCs

It is assumed that each PC comes with a monitor, keyboard and mouse. Aside from printers, scanners, or plotters that might be attached directly to the PCs, you need not report any other peripherals at this time. However, this could change in future years.

Software

Software may be reported in aggregate although the application is also designed where individual licenses can also be maintained. How to maintain the licenses is solely the decision of each agency.

Models and Software Versions

If GITA is interested in particular hardware models or software versions, that information will be included in the “Code” field and is built into the standard naming conventions used in the drop down lists in the application and referenced in the “Inventory Naming Standards” document used for uploading data into ISIS. The model and version fields are provided in the application for agencies use, but are not required.

Definition of Data Elements

Location: This optional field is strictly for agency use. The agency determines whether this field is used and how locations are reported.

City: This field is also optional and for agency use only.

Manufacturer: This required field contains a list of manufactures and software publishers to choose from. If you don’t know the manufacturer of the product, choose “Other.”

Serial Number: Either the Serial Number or the Asset Tag Number must be provided in order to save the information about the hardware asset. Additionally, Serial Number for software is required to save the record, but is not needed by GITA. If the agency doesn't want to place actual serial numbers for software within ISIS, any unique alpha-numeric series is acceptable.

Asset Tag Number: Either the Asset Tag Number or the Serial Number is required in order to save the information about the hardware asset. Asset Tag Number is not a selection for software.

Asset Group: This required field organizes all assets into one of six high level categories. Choose from the drop down list in the field. Whatever is selected in Asset Group will determine choices in Asset Type.

Number of Licenses: This is a required field for software assets only. This enables to report the same software assets in aggregate. For example, if your agency had 100 copies of Office 97, then you would place "100" in this field. However, agencies may report software packages individually, inputting serial numbers for each package, if they so desire. In that case, number of licenses would be recorded as "1" per record.

Asset Type: Another required field that organizes assets into categories. Choose from the drop down list in the field. Whatever is selected in Asset Type will determine choices in Asset Code. There is an "Other" selection if your asset doesn't fall into any other category.

Maintenance Type: This optional field provides a way for the agency to track how the hardware asset is maintained. Select from one of the options in the drop down list. Although the selection is allowed during the input of software assets, it is usually not applicable.

Asset Code: The lowest level used to organize assets into categories. This required field also has "Other" as acceptable selections incase you cannot find an appropriate category for your asset.

Maintenance Vendor: An optional field that allows the input of the vendor that maintains the hardware asset. Although the selection is allowed during the input of software assets, it is usually not applicable.

Model: This field allows the input of the hardware asset model, at the agency's option. Other identifying information may also be placed here. This field is only present when inputting hardware assets.

Version: This field allows the input of software versions, at the agency's option. This field is only present when inputting software assets.

Acquisition Date: An optional field that allows the agency to capture the date the asset was purchased. Agencies also have the option of using this field to capture the received date, billed date, or any other alternative date that is more useful to them.

Asset Status: The statutes require GITA to maintain a list of all assets that are “owned, leased or employed” by the State. “Employed” means an asset in use by State employees while doing their jobs, but might be owned by another entity such as the federal government for an example.

Unit Cost: An optional field that allows an agency to input the cost of the asset.

Disposition: An optional field that allows an agency to retire an asset but keep record of it. There is a drop down list that provides choices of various ways the asset may leave state service.

Disposition Date: The date that the asset leaves state service. This field is optional.

Comments: Any additional information about the asset may be placed here, at the agency’s discretion.

ISIS Features

Probably the most popular feature of ISIS is the ability to upload data from other inventory systems. GITA recognizes that many agencies already maintain IT inventories. In these cases agencies simply download their data from these other systems, manipulate the data to meet GITA’s reporting requirements of naming standards and file format, and upload their data into ISIS using the provided upload feature within the application.

Agencies also have the ability to download their data if they wish. This allows agencies to develop custom reports using tools they are most comfortable with outside the reports offered by ISIS.

Another popular feature of ISIS is the ability to divide up the agency into “sub-organizations” and allow each of these entities to maintain their own piece of the inventory. Also, each sub-organization has the ability to upload their data. To use this feature, the agency must assign an agency application administrator to develop the sub-organizations and to assign user rights and passwords to the various sub-organizations.

There are other benefits to having an agency administrator. Not only does the agency control who within their agency has rights to input or change data but they can also assign other agency members read-only access. They may also give people outside their agency rights to view data as well. The important thing is that each agency controls access to their data.

Administrator rights also gives the agency the ability, if they choose to delete the whole hardware and software inventory and reload the data from scratch. This eliminates the need for agencies already maintaining an inventory system to spend lots of time trying to reconcile the two systems.

Help and Training

If you run into a problem, please remember that help is only a phone call or E-mail message away. The phone number is (602) 364-4784. You may also E-mail jlittleton@azgita.gov. Please do not spend a lot of time trying to resolve problems. GITA staff has a lot of experience with this application and with inventories and will help you quickly resolve any problems.

GITA will also come to your agency and give hands on training to those who request it. Additionally, GITA will assist small agencies, boards, or commissions needing help to complete their inventory.

Within the application there are help screens for each section that provide guidance. GITA personnel are constantly adding, updating and changing help screens based on feedback from those using the applications.